

econnections



July 2005

The electronic newsletter of MoDOT District 4, Kansas City Area

MEETINGS/TRAINING

Friday, July 8

Missouri Highways & Transportation
Commission, Jefferson City

Tuesday, July 12

Supervisor training, 8-11 a.m. Room 136

Tuesday, July 12

Pavement Team, 7:30 a.m., Boardroom

Wednesday, July 13

Supervisor training, 8-11 a.m. Room 136

Tuesday, July 19

Stock Area Team, 8 a.m.-10 a.m.,
87th Street facility

Tuesday, July 19

Interstate 470/Strother Road interchange
public meeting, 5-7 p.m., Lee's Summit North
High School, 400 NE Douglas Street

Wednesday, July 20

Job Status, Group 4, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
Job Status, Group 2, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
Job Status, Group 3, 12:30-1:30 p.m.
Job Status, Group 1, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 21

Directional Team, 9-11:30 a.m., Boardroom
Management Team, 1-3 p.m., Boardroom

Friday, July 22

Pavement Team, 7:30 a.m., Boardroom

EVENTS

Saturday, July 16

District 4 Spring Motorcycle Ride; leaves
from the District Office at 9:15 a.m. and will
ride over the new Missouri River bridges at
Lexington and Waverly. Call Misty Zingsheim
at 622-6302 for details.

Saturday, July 16

MoDOT District 4 Night at I-70 Speedway;
gates open at 5 p.m., races begin at 7 p.m.
Final RSVP and money due to Misty Zingsheim
by July 11; call her at 622-6302 for details.

New Missouri River Bridge Opens June 25



Hundreds of Ray and Lafayette County residents celebrated the opening of the new Route 13 Missouri River bridge on June 25. They met in the center of the bridge (top left photo) shortly before 10 a.m., when District Engineer Beth Wright (top right) gave local officials the three-second warning to cut the ribbon. After the scissors snipped and ribbon was cut and distributed for souvenirs (right), vehicles caravanned to the old Route 13 bridge in Lexington for a final trip over the 80-year-old structure. MoDOT crews moved in to close the old bridge immediately following the event (below). The new bridge will become the Congressmen Ike Skelton Bridge on Aug. 28, when a bill naming the structure for Skelton takes effect.



News from Across the District

District 4 to State Fair on Aug. 19: Pat Rath, who coordinates District 4's State Fair participation, reports that D4 personnel will host the MoDOT displays on Friday, Aug. 19. A large pool of potential volunteers applied to work at the event, and eight volunteers were chosen at random on July 1.

The volunteers will be divided into two four-person teams that will work a half-day shift at the displays in the Transportation Exposition Center within the Highway Gardens.

Rath said the fair is an excellent opportunity to share the department's mission and messages with MoDOT's customers.

"Most of the displays in the Expo Center will be developed and set up by Central Office staff, but there's an area set aside to display district-specific information and items," she said. Departments or individuals wishing to prepare displays should contact her for more information.

Condolences: Our prayers are with Michelle Nelson of the Regional Counsel's office; retiree Dennis Kenslow; and Ted Dewolf, signal and lighting electrician. Michelle's father-in law died May 29. Dennis' wife passed away June 1. Ted's father passed away June 3.

Bloody good show: The Community Blood Center had 30 registrants and collected 26 units during its June 21 visit to District 4 headquarters.

Camp and Float Trip: The Activities Committee has scheduled a weekend float trip along the Elk River near Noel, Mo. Aug. 12-14. The \$30 per-person cost includes two nights of camping and a one-day river float. Special rates for children are available. The group will leave D4 offices at 4:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 12. Contact Misty Zingsheim at 622-6302 by July 15 to make your reservation.

Back-tax Legislation Awaits OK: Central Office Human Resources Director Micki Knudsen told the Employee Advisory Council at its May meeting that the legislation dealing with employees' requirement to file income tax returns has been revised.

"Two years ago a law was passed that says all state employees must file their required tax returns and pay their taxes as a condition of continued employment with the State of Missouri," Knudsen said. "This year, legislators revised it slightly so that, if signed by the governor, state employees who owe state income taxes are required to pay the back taxes they owe through payroll deduction."

The bill awaits Gov. Blunt's signature.

Congratulations to Michelle Nelson, legal assistant in the Regional Counsel's office. She and her husband, Russ, welcomed Emma Violet into their family on June 28. Their daughter weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces, and was just more than 20 inches long.



Motorist Assist Operator Lee McAllister chats with students from the Kansas City Summer Transportation Institute who have been inspecting the bed of McAllister's truck. Students visited District 4 on July 5.



Reed Brunk stirs a paste made from rock dust to demonstrate a test for elasticity in the Materials Lab, to the delight of Kansas City Summer Transportation Institute students.



Crews working at the I-435/Route 350 interchange noticed this sign posted by a grateful neighbor as the project wrapped up in early June.

Corporate Ladder

Welcome to District 4

Assistant construction technician
Terry Babbitt

Senior traffic systems operator
Chantay Baker

Construction inspectors
Brandon Cracraft, Lucas Kaspar and Zachary Walker

Construction technician
Corey Hansen

Traffic engineering specialist
Jessica Hutton

Crew worker
William Landsman

Shop mechanics
Gabriel Sammon and Steven Young

Highway designer
Juan Yin

Promoted

Intermediate construction technician
Alan Cadwallader

Intermediate crew workers
Lloyd Crawford and Randall Easley

Senior crew worker
Elmer Gillespie

Senior clerk
Nancy Lancaster

Senior traffic systems operator
Sandra Meagher

Construction technician
Brady Watson

Porter's Work Makes National Airwaves

Editor's Note: The following essay was written by Senior Community Relations Specialist Steve Porter (right). It was selected from more than 3,000 entries submitted to National Public Radio's "This I Believe" series, and was aired during the June 20 Morning Edition broadcast. Porter recorded the essay at KCUR's Kansas City studio.

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I believe in the 50-percent theory. Half the time things are better than normal; the other half, they are worse. I believe life is a pendulum swing. It takes time and experience to understand what normal is, and that gives me the perspective to deal with the surprises of the future.

Let's benchmark the parameters: Yes, I will die. I've dealt with the deaths of both parents, a best friend, a beloved boss and cherished pets. Some of these deaths have been violent, before my eyes, or slow and agonizing. Bad stuff, and it belongs at the bottom of the scale.

Then there are those high points: romance and marriage to the right person; having a child and doing those Dad things like coaching my son's baseball team, paddling around the creek in the boat while he's swimming with the dogs, discovering his compassion so deep it manifests even in his kindness to snails, his imagination so vivid he builds a spaceship from a scattered pile of Legos.

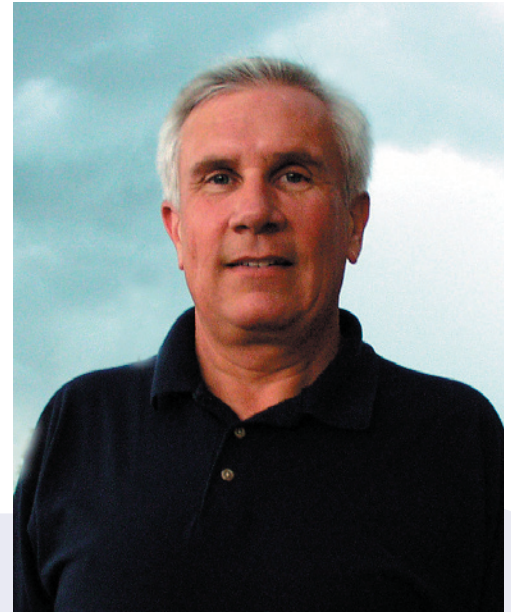
But there is a vast meadow of life in the middle, where the bad and the good flip-flop acrobatically. This is what convinces me to believe in the 50-percent theory.

One spring I planted corn too early in a bottomland so flood-prone that neighbors laughed. I felt chagrined at the wasted effort. Summer turned brutal — the worst heat wave and drought in my lifetime. The air-conditioner died, the well went dry, the marriage ended, the job lost, the money gone. I was living lyrics from a country tune — music I loathed. Only a surging Kansas City Royals team, bound for their first World Series, buoyed my spirits.

Looking back on that horrible summer, I soon understood that all succeeding good things merely offset the bad. Worse than normal wouldn't last long. I am owed and savor the halcyon times. They reinvigorate me for the next nasty surprise and offer assurance that I can thrive. The 50 percent theory even helps me see hope beyond my Royals' recent slump, a field of struggling rookies sown so that some year soon we can reap an October harvest.

Oh, yeah, the corn crop? For that one blistering summer, the ground moisture was just right, planting early allowed pollination before heat withered the tops, and the lack of rain spared the standing corn from floods. That winter my crib overflowed with corn — fat, healthy three-to-a-stalk ears filled with kernels from heel to tip — while my neighbors' fields yielded only brown, empty husks.

Although plantings past may have fallen below the 50-percent expectation, and they probably will again in the future, I am still sustained by the crop that flourishes during the drought.



econnections sources

Construction Bev Chrisco, 6341

Design Flo Noear, 0455

Regional Counsel LeAnn Francis, 6382

Administration Judy Magruder, 6309

General Services Toni Terry, 0050

Human Resources Belinda Fite, 6321

Maintenance Pat Rath, 0420

Materials Shana Blaylock, 6525

Right of Way Melbra Taylor, 6351

Traffic Dawn Phillips, 0401

Editor Jennifer Benefield, 6328

Smooth Roads Initiative

490 centerline miles of the Kansas City Area's busiest roadways in good condition by Dec. 2007

Progress to Date



Smoother, Safer, Sooner
Amendment 3

Tons

1,184,276 _____
986,897 _____
789,518 _____
592,139 _____
384,760 _____
197,381 _____

14,218 tons

Tons of asphalt

Miles

490 _____
408 _____
326 _____
244 _____
162 _____
80 _____

1 mile

Striping

Square Yards

30,000 _____
25,000 _____
20,000 _____
15,000 _____
10,000 _____
5,000 _____

16,517sq.
yds.

Pavement repair

Miles

490 _____
408 _____
326 _____
244 _____
162 _____
80 _____

0 miles

Reflectors

Square Yards

329,602 _____
274,668 _____
219,734 _____
164,800 _____
109,866 _____
54,932 _____

0 sq. yds.

Ultrathin-bonded wearing surface

Square Feet

60,000 _____
50,000 _____
40,000 _____
30,000 _____
20,000 _____
10,000 _____

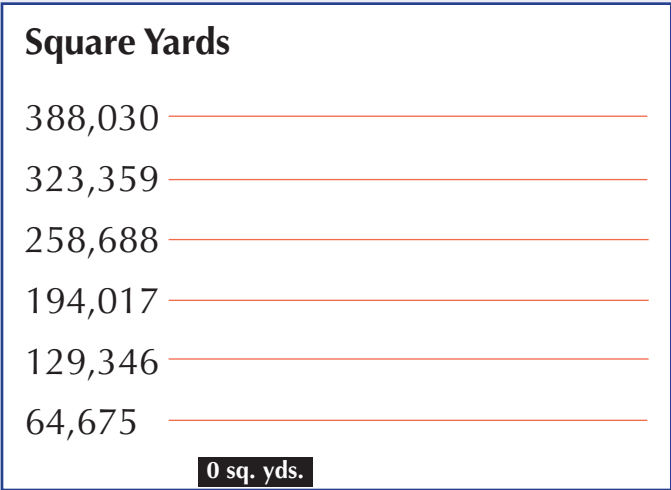
11,492
sq. ft.

Signs

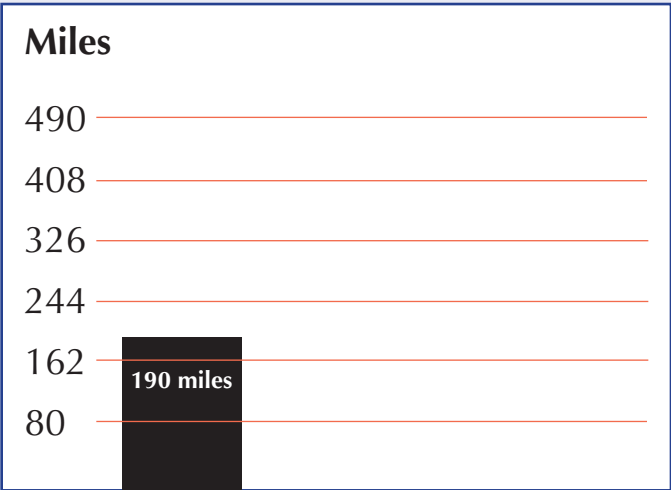
Smooth Roads Initiative

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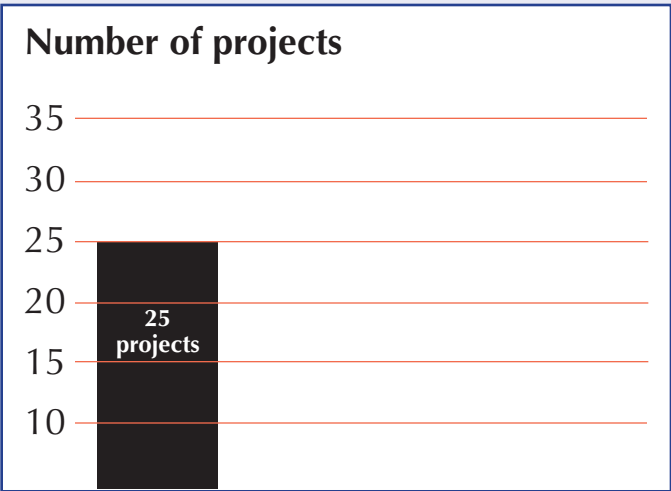
Progress to Date



Diamond grinding



Clear zones cleared



Projects designed